

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SINGAP 00641 01 OF 02 180027Z

66

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 MC-02 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 /072 W

----- 074475

R 170625Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2003

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0641

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, RP

SUBJ: UPI INTERVIEW WITH MNLF LEADER

REF: MANILA 1956

SUMMARY: ROWLINSON CARTER INFORMED DCM THAT ALL MEMBERS OF MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) CENTRAL COMMITTEE INCLUDING SUBJECT OF FEBRUARY 11 INTERVIEW USE CODE NAMES, AND THEREFORE HE DID NOT KNOW REAL NAME OF PERSON HE INTERVIEWED. HOWEVER, HE PROVIDED TEXT OF FOUR PROPOSALS MADE BY MNLF COMMITTEE AT JIDDA AND COMMENTED AT SOME LENGTH ON MNLF LEADERSHIP AND ATTITUDES. END SUMMARY.

1. DCM MET WITH ROWLINSON CARTER FEBRUARY 16 AND FOUND HIM TO BE PERCEPTIVE, FAIRLY CAUTIOUS BUT STILL RELATIVELY FORTHCOMING IN DISCUSSING MNLF MOVEMENT IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. AT END OF DISCUSSION

HE INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO MEET AGAIN IN EVENT HE DEVELOPED ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR INSIGHTS INTO MUSLIM PROBLEM IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. HOWEVER, HE ALSO MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD COMPROMISE HIS SOURCES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SINGAP 00641 01 OF 02 180027Z

2. CARTER SAID HE HAD VISITED MINDANAO AND BASILAN IN MID-DECEMBER

AND TALKED WITH SEVERAL OF THE MNLF LEADERS. HE SAID THERE WERE 15 MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, BUT OWING TO LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR MORE THAN FIVE OR SIX TO MEET AT ANY ONE TIME. MOST OF THEM SPOKE PERFECT ENGLISH AND HE GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT TWO OR THREE OF THEM MAY HAVE BEEN CIVIL SERVANTS WHO HAD AT SOME FORMER TIME BEEN APPOINTED BY MARCOS TO A COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO MORO PROBLEMS, AND WHO HAD EVENTUALLY BECOME DISILLUSIONED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND GONE OVER TO THE REBEL CAUSE. ALL OF THE MNLF LEADERS HE MET USED CODE NAMES BECAUSE MANY OF THEM HAD FAMILIES LIVING IN AREAS UNDER P.G. CONTROL. HE HAD EXTENSIVE TELEVISION INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THEM WHO CALLED HIMSELF ALI. CARTER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT AS THE RESULT OF PREVIOUS VISITS TO THE MINDANAO AREA HE HAD COME TO KNOW TWO OF THE OTHER LEADERS BY THEIR REAL NAMES, BUT HE SAID HE WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO DIVULGE THEM EVEN IN CONFIDENCE.

3. CARTER SAID HE SUBSEQUENTLY MET ALI AGAIN "SOMEWHERE IN SEA" IN EARLY FEBRUARY AFTER HE HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE JIDDA TALKS AND WAS ON HIS WAY BACK TO MINDANAO. THIS WAS THE PERSON WHO GAVE HIM THE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW REPORTED IN HIS FEBRUARY 11 DESPATCH FROM SINGAPORE. CARTER SAID THAT IF THE U.S. EMBASSY IN MANILA WANTED TO SEE WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE IT COULD CONTACT THE UPI OFFICE IN MANILA AND ASK IT TO OBTAIN FROM LONDON THE UPI-TN ROVING REPORT ON THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES MADE SHORTLY BEFORE CHRISTMAS. AS NOTED IN PARA 2, ALI FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THIS TELEVISED REPORT. DURING HIS FEBRUARY INTERVIEW ALI GAVE CARTER THE TEXT OF THE MNLF PROPOSALS AT JIDDA, P.G. REP MELCHOR'S COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS THREE AND FOUR, PART OF THE TEXT OF MELCHOR'S PROPOSED DRAFT RESOLUTION AND NUR MIZHAURI'S CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

4. CARTER SAID THAT ACCORDING TO ALI, NUR MIZHAURI AND SIX OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MNLF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MET AT JIDDA WITH PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TEAM HEADED BY ALEX MELCHOR SIX TIMES BETWEEN JANUARY 18 AND 29. MNLF TEAM TABLED FOLLOWING FOUR PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION:

QUOTE

- A. ACCEPTANCE BY THE P.G. OF THE INSEPARABLE UNITY OF THE BANGSA MORO PEOPLE AND THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF THE BANGSA MORO HOMELAND OF MINDANAO, BASILAN, SULU AND PALAWAN.
 - B. ACCEPTANCE BY THE P.G. OF THE COMPLETE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE BANGSA
- CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SINGAP 00641 01 OF 02 180027Z

- MORO PEOPLE OVER THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMELAND OF MINDANAO, BASILAN, SULU AND PALAWAN.
- C. ACCEPTANCE BY THE P.G. OF THE POLITICAL AUTONOMY OF MINDANAO, BASILAN, SULU AND PALAWAN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF PHILIPPINE SOVEREIGNTY.
- D. ACCEPTANCE BY THE P.G. THAT WHILE THE PROTECTION OF MINDANAO, BASILAN, SULU AND PALAWAN FROM EXTERNAL THREAT AND AGGRESSION SHALL BE THE PRIMARY DUTY OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, THE

MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND INTERNAL SECURITY WITHIN THE AREA SHALL BE EXCLUSIVELY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE AUTONOMOUS BANGSA MORO GOVERNMENT. UNQUOTE.

5. ALI ALSO GAVE CARTER THE FOLLOWING SELECTED QUOTES FROM MELCHOR'S COMMENTS (SOME OF WHICH APPEARED IN THE UPI INTERVIEW) ON THE MNLF'S THIRD PROPOSAL:

QUOTE AGAIN, THE CONCEPT OF QUOTE POLITICAL AUTONOMY UNQUOTE IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO UNDERSTAND BECAUSE WE ARE HERE DEALING WITH ONE, UNITARY NATION-STATE -- NOT A CONFEDERATION, FEDERATION, OR COMMON-WEALTH OF SEMI-INDEPENDENT OR SEMI-AUTONOMOUS STATES.

QUOTE WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THESE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE PROPOSAL ARE PEOPLED NOT ONLY BY MUSLIMS BUT BY CHRISTIANS AND BY PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS AS WELL; AND THEREFORE THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION OF A MUSLIM GOVERNMENT SEPARATELY ADMINISTERING THE AREAS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PHIL CONSTITUTION...

QUOTE INDEED, AS THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES, LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS MAY GROUP THEMSELVES OR CONSOLIDATE OR COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS, SERVICES AND RESOURCES FOR PURPOSES COMMONLY BENEFICIAL TO THEM. THEY ARE, FURTHERMORE, EMPOWERED TO CREATE THEIR OWN SOURCES OF REVENUE AND TO LEVY TAXES, THUS PROVIDING RESOURCES ESSENTIAL TO INSURE THEIR VIABILITY OR AUTONOMY.

6. ACCORDING TO ALI, MELCHOR ALSO MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENT ON THE FOURTH PROPOSAL:

QUOTE... THE ENTIRE QUESTION OF MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND INTERNAL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SINGAP 00641 02 OF 02 180011Z

66

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 MC-02 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 /072 W

----- 074425

R 170625Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2004

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0641

SECURITY BOILS DOWN TO ADMINISTRATION AND STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS UNDER WHICH PERHAPS MR. MIZHAURI AND HIS ASSOCIATES COULD PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE. THIS IS PROBABLY A DETAIL THAT CAN BE WORKED OUT SUBSEQUENTLY. UNQUOTE.

7. ALI TOLD CARTER THAT MELCHOR'S DRAFT RESOLUTION CALLED FOR A CEASE FIRE SEVEN DAYS AFTER SIGNING, AND QUOTE INTEGRATION AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SPECIAL PARA-MILITARY FORCES IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (SIC) OF THE FILIPINO MUSLIM FIGHTERS WHO ARE NOT CRIMINALS AND OUTLAWS. UNQUOTE.

8. MIZHAURI'S FINAL STATEMENT AT THE TALKS INDICATING THAT THE RESPECTIVE POSITIONS REMAINED FAR APART IS PRECISELY AS QUOTED IN THE PENULTIMATE PARA OF THE UPI FEBRUARY 11 INTERVIEW.

9. CARTER COMMENTED THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE MNLF ARE VERY SOPHISTICATED IN SOME RESPECTS -- ESPECIALLY ON POLITICAL/SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE PHILIPPINES -- BUT VERY NAIVE IN OTHER AREAS, E.G., KNOWLEDGE OF TYPES AND CAPABILITIES OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS, COMPLEXITIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ETC. MIZHAURI APPEARS TO BE THE ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER, BUT THERE MIGHT WELL BE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SINGAP 00641 02 OF 02 180011Z

FACTIONALISM WHICH THEY DID NOT WISH TO REVEAL TO AN OUTSIDER. DURING HIS DECEMBER VISIT TO MINDANAO AND BASILAN CARTER SAW NO INDICATION (ASIDE FROM ADVOCATING INDEPENDANCE) THAT THE MOVEMENT HAD ANY IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF AN EXTREMIST NATURE.

10. CARTER BELIEVES THAT THE MNLF CONCESSION IN THE THIRD PROPOSAL IS VERY SIGNIFICANT. WHEN HE VISITED MINDANAO IN DECEMBER, ALL THE LEADERS TALKED IN TERMS OF DEMANDING FULL INDEPENDENCE AND WERE DISCUSSING PLANS TO HOLD A "NATIONAL CONGRESS" TO PAVE THE WAY FOR INDEPENDENCE. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE STRONG PRESSURE EXERTED BY AL TOHAMY THE MNLF LEADERSHIP RELUCTANTLY SHIFTED THEIR POSITION TO REQUESTING ONLY POLITICAL AUTONOMY FOR MINDANAO, BASILAN, SULU AND PALAWAN. ALTHOUGH SEVEN MNLF LEADERS WERE AT JIDDA, CARTER FELT IT WAS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN WHETHER AUTONOMY WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHER MNLF LEADERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS. CARTER SAID ALI WAS VERY VAGUE ABOUT AUTONOMY. WHILE IT SEEMED FAIRLY CLEAR THAT THE MNLF LEADERSHIP WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONCEDE THAT DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS SHOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, IT HAD NOT YET WORKED OUT HOW REVENUE PRODUCED IN THE AUTONOMOUS

REGION (ESPECIALLY ANY FUTURE OIL REVENUE) WOULD BE SPLIT BETWEEN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

11. WHEN DCM ASKED WHETHER MNLF PROPOSED TO GIVE CHRISTIANS LIVING WITHIN ANY "AUTONOMOUS REGION" ANY SPECIAL STATUS, CARTER REPLIED THAT THE MNLF LEADERS WOULD ONLY SAY THAT THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF CHRISTIANS WOULD BE FULLY RESPECTED AND THAT THEY MIGHT BE GIVEN PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN ANY STATE ASSEMBLY. CARTER SAID THE MNLF CLAIMED THAT IT WAS RECEIVING GROWING SUPPORT FROM CHRISTIANS IN THE REGION WHO WERE BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT THE CHARACTER OF THE MOVEMENT WAS MORE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL THAN IT WAS RELIGIOUS. HOWEVER, WHEN CARTER PRESSED THE MNLF LEADERS TO SAY HOW MANY CHRISTIANS WERE ACTUALLY FIGHTING IN THEIR RANKS, THEY ADMITTED THAT THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN FIGHTERS WAS NEGLIGIBLE AND THAT THE GROWING CHRISTIAN SUPPORT WAS LARGELY TACIT IN NATURE.

12. CARTER SAID THAT THE MNLF DOES NOT BELIEVE ANY CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT IN MANILA WOULD MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MNLF. THEY REGARDED AQUINO AND OTHER POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS TO MARCOS AS ALL BELONGING TO THE SAME OLIGARCHY. WHEN CARTER WAS IN MINDANAO IN DECEMBER HE FOUND THE MNLF'S PRIN-

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SINGAP 00641 02 OF 02 180011Z

CIPAL WORRY WAS THAT IT COULD SEE NO POSSIBILITY THAT MANILA WOULD EVER AGREE TO INDEPENDENCE, AND THAT THE MOVEMENT MIGHT BE CONDEMNED TO PERPETUAL WARFARE. HOWEVER, CARTER FELT THAT THE MORE ASTUTE MNLF LEADERS BELIEVE THAT THROUGH MAINTAINING CONTINUING MILITARY PRESSURE, THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MAY EVENTUALLY BE FORCED TO AGREE TO AUTONOMOUS STATUS. THIS MAY HAVE CAUSED THEM TO YIELD TO AL TOHAMY'S PRESSURE TO RECOGNIZE P.G. SOVEREIGNTY BEFORE UNDERTAKING TALKS.

13. WHEN ASKED ABOUT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE U.S., CARTER SAID HE FOUND THE MNLF LEADERSHIP SOMEWHAT SUSPICIOUS OF THE U.S.G. AND ITS OVERALL

SUPPORT FOR MARCOS, BUT HE DID NOT FIND THEM BITTER ABOUT U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE P.G. OR STRONGLY ANTI-AMERICAN IN THEIR ATTITUDES.

14. CARTER SAID HE VISITED THEIR MILITARY CAMPS IN DECEMBER AND SAW A WIDE VARIETY OF RIFLES INCLUDING M-16S, AR-18S, AND M-1S, BUT HE SAW ABSOLUTELY NO AKS DURING HIS TOUR OF REBEL AREAS. CARTER WAS ALSO OPENLY SKEPTICAL OF HOW MUCH EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT WAS COMING FROM SABAH. ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT HIS HOSTS MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED IN CONCEALING FROM HIM AN EXTENSIVE SABAH CONNECTION, HE HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE EXTENT OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM OR THROUGH SABAH WAS MARGINAL. SUPPORT FROM LIBYA MAY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT GREATER, BUT THE MNLF TOLD HIM THEY HAD RECEIVED ONLY 4000 RIFLES FROM LIBYA BROUGHT IN BY SEA.

15. CARTER ASSUMES HE IS PERSONA NON GRATA IN MANILA AND DOES NOT PLAN TO VISIT THERE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE MIGHT

RETURN TO THE REBEL AREA AGAIN IN NEXT FEW MONTHS. CRONK

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, PRESS CONFERENCES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SINGAP00641
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750057-0177
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750237/aaaabhdy.tel
Line Count: 278
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: MANILA 1956
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UPI INTERVIEW WITH MNLF LEADER
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, RP, MNLF
To: MANILA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006